

SEPTEMBER 1950

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

SOUND THE ALARM!

THE EDITORS

CONTRAST IN GERMANY

BASIL DAVIDSON

NOTES ON LEFT PROPAGANDA

LEO HUBERMAN

COOPERATION ON THE LEFT

HAROLD L. WHITE

JOSEPH GILBERT

VOL. 2

5

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEENEY

CONTENTS

VOLUME TWO NUMBER FIVE SEPTEMBER, 1950

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: Sound The Alarm!	137
CONTRAST IN GERMANY by Basil Davidson	147
NOTES ON LEFT PROPAGANDA by Leo Huberman	155
COOPERATION ON THE LEFT: Discussion by University Teacher of Economics, Harold L. White, Joseph Gilbert	161

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Last month we sent out to all domestic subscribers an advance proof of our article on Korea. We asked for reactions, both favorable and unfavorable, and offered to supply additional copies of the proof.

The response amazed us. We printed 1000 extra copies, not really expecting to get rid of that many, but because it was a round number and the cost of a few hundred more is small once the material is put on the press. The first day's mail contained requests from more than two dozen subscribers for 904 copies. From then on for more than a week requests arrived in similar number and volume. At the time of writing (August 15), the flow has diminished somewhat, but every mail still brings additional requests. Many of the requests, moreover, have been accompanied by money to help pay the cost of printing and postage so that on balance the whole operation will probably

(continued on page 168)

SOUND THE ALARM!

The Korean war shows that our rulers are leading us along the road to national defeat and disaster.

It was a series of blunders by the United States government which set the stage for the war in the first place. On various occasions high-placed officials indicated that the United States did not consider Korea to be a strategically important or defensible area; but at the very same time our government established, and allowed its own prestige to become tied up with, an incredibly weak and corrupt regime in South Korea. Surely this was a perfect formula for inviting an attack from the revolutionary North Korean government. It seemed to promise the North Koreans success at little cost in an enterprise which would have the overwhelming support not only of the Korean people but also of Asian public opinion as a whole. Moreover it was a formula which promised a stunning American political defeat and was therefore well calculated to persuade the Russians not to veto the North Korean attack.

The United States government, having in effect invited the North Koreans to attack, then made no plans to meet the attack when it came. Seeing that a withdrawal would be a political defeat with wide international repercussions — something which should have been obvious enough all along—the authorities in Washington hastened to throw in American military forces under the most unfavorable conceivable conditions and in such a way as to sacrifice many American lives and to arouse deep resentment at home.

Finally, having got thoroughly involved in Korea, our rulers are beginning to wake up and discover that something like half of the country's effective military strength is tied up in fighting what is politically a very harmful and dangerous war for no strategic purpose whatever.

As though all this were not enough, the Truman administration coupled its bungling moves in Korea with what may turn out to be one of the biggest blunders in the whole history of international relations, the decision to commit American forces to hold Formosa for Chiang Kai-shek against an expected attack by the real Chinese government. Formosa belongs to China; the American government itself said so in no uncertain terms only a few months ago. On January

5th Secretary of State Acheson told a press conference:

The Chinese have administered Formosa for four years. Neither the United States nor any other ally ever questioned the authority of that occupation. . . . We are honorable and decent people. We do not put forward words, as propagandists do in other countries, to serve their advantage, only to throw them overboard when some change in events makes the position difficult for us.

And yet now this very same American government, while purporting to act only on the highest grounds of international morality, jumps with both feet right into the middle of China's internal affairs. What this can lead to is all too clear: a war between the United States and China in which practically the whole world will be on China's side. The architects of American policy will then be faced with the choice of ignominiously backing down or of plunging into an adventure which could use up practically all the country's military strength for years to come and with just as little strategic purpose as the Korean war.

Nor is this the end of dangerous American commitments in Asia. The Quirino regime in the Philippines is in a bad way; the revolutionary Huk movement is growing in strength and in the next few years will probably be ready and able to take over. The United States has already begun to send more troops, and the demand is sure to grow. Similarly in Indo-China, the strength of the Vietminh revolutionaries is on the upgrade. Neither the puppet Bao Dai nor his French masters are able to control the situation. Here again more American help, both economic and military, is wanted, and the Truman administration is obligingly shelling out.

The bald facts, then, are that we have already stumbled into one war in Asia and are rapidly heading for others. If they come, all these wars will merge into one great war of most of the peoples of Asia against the United States. All of the colonial peoples of the world will be against the United States, and all of this country's allies will be effectively immobilized by deep political divisions which in some cases already exist and in others will surely be created by such a war. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, which American ruling class logic holds to be the aggressive instigator of all these troubles, will, as usual, keep Russian soldiers at home and will gain in prestige and power as the United States sinks deeper and deeper into the morass of a reactionary, counter-revolutionary war.

"But how about the A-bomb?" some Americans are asking. Yes, how about it? You can't win wars against peasant countries with A-bombs. For that you need ground forces. Lots and lots of them,

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

as the Japanese can testify—in fact more than the United States ever dreamed of raising and equipping. And would it really help to drop A-bombs on the Soviet Union? Of course not. That would only bring the Soviet Union into the war, ensure the occupation by Soviet forces of all Europe, the Middle East, and probably Africa—and incidentally bring atomic destruction to American cities, the largest collection of vulnerable targets in the whole world.

Let us repeat the bitter truth: our rulers are leading us down the road to national defeat and disaster. The policies which they are now pursuing are not calculated to serve any concept of the national interest, not even the most selfish and greedy. They are policies which, if persisted in, will end in the degradation and ruin of the whole American people.

What is the explanation of this strange behavior? It would, of course, be nonsense to assume that Truman, Acheson, Johnson, Vandenberg, Connally and the rest are insane or wicked men. It would also be nonsense to assume that they are the mere executors of a hideous Wall Street plot to destroy the country. Such assumptions can easily be used to "explain" everything in history—which is only another way of saying that they explain nothing. The whole truth is undoubtedly extremely complicated, but an important part of it at any rate seems to be that almost the entire American ruling class has seriously misjudged the forces at work in the world today and is acting on a diagnosis of the overall situation which is a grotesque distortion of reality.

The heart of this diagnosis is the belief that the basic dynamic factor in the present world situation is Russian expansionism, a drive on the part of the Soviet Union to conquer the world. This is supposed to be a force which, except for certain differences in method, is identical with the expansionism of Hitlerite Germany. Hence, allowing for all differences in detail, the present world situation is like that of the thirties. Russia, it is held, is everywhere on the offensive, either directly or through her satellites or agents; every threat to the status quo is a manifestation of Russian expansionism. Now the experience of the thirties shows that you cannot appease an aggressor; trying to do so only feeds his appetite. It follows—so runs the argument—that there is no point in attempting to deal with the Russians. The only language they understand is force. Hence every threat to the status quo must be met by force, and the military strength of the United States and its allies must be built up until it is so overwhelming that the Russians will recognize that their policy of world conquest is hopeless.

Interpreted in these terms, the present situation is something like this: The Soviet Union, acting through its Asian puppets, has

launched a war of aggression and conquest in Korea and is threatening Formosa and Indo-China—the latter two regions being assumed to be strategically vital to the defense of American positions in the western Pacific. The United States has to counter these thrusts by force, and this for several reasons: first, because if we failed to do so all our allies and potential allies in the Far East (and probably some elsewhere as well) would be intimidated and would desert us; second, to prevent the Russians from gaining bases for further outward thrusts (for example, against Japan and the Philippines); and finally, to teach the Russians that we mean business and from now on will meet force with force. It is recognized that the American policy of using force in Asia is a risky one. If the Russians should choose to, they could, of course, throw us out of the Far East in short order. Moreover, they could quickly overrun western Europe, pushing us back to the western hemisphere and effectively isolating us from our allies. What is more, according to this interpretation, the Russians *would* do this tomorrow but for the deterrent power of the A-bomb. It follows that right now there is nothing but American superiority in atomic weapons—and perhaps in other weapons of mass destruction—which prevents the Russians from immediately conquering the entire eastern hemisphere, an achievement which would be a long step toward the ultimate goal of world domination. For the present, therefore, the United States must operate behind this shield of atomic superiority, but we must also remember that the Russians have the A-bomb too and that our superiority may not last very long. Hence at the same time we must feverishly build up our own and our allies' military power so that eventually we shall be able to meet the Russians on terms of all around equality.

This, we think, is a fair description of the present views of our rulers. As we have already pointed out, the policies to which these views give rise are leading the country not to peace and national security but to war and national disaster. By our armed support of reactionary regimes in Asia we are not holding Asian allies—we are driving away the few that are still left to us; we are not countering the thrusts of a few Russian puppets—we are embroiling ourselves in a war with a continent in revolution; we are not holding the line while we and our allies build up military strength—we are wasting our military strength and convincing our allies that they would be foolish to rely on our protection. It is surely clear that the underlying analysis on which these policies are based must be wrong. Wherein lies the error?

The error lies, we believe, in the very first premise, that the Russians are out to conquer the world. In saying this, we do not mean

to imply that the Soviet leaders are particularly saintly or virtuous people. On the contrary, they are obviously very tough, and in order to accomplish their aims they use pretty much whatever means come to hand. The question, however, is not whether Stalin and his associates are "good" or "bad," but whether the ideas they live by and the social pressures that impinge upon them are such as to drive them toward world conquest. The answer, it seems to us, is quite obviously, No. It will scarcely be denied that the Soviet leaders are Marxists, and Marxism contains no shred of support for a policy of world conquest by any nation. Stalin has made certain additions to Marxist doctrine—additions which, in the view of the Soviet leaders, are necessitated by the experiences of recent years—but you would look in vain for even a hint of the kind of aggressive-imperialist thinking that was and is an integral part of fascism. Moreover there is nothing in the structure of Soviet society which impels toward conquest of foreign nations. The USSR contains all the resources needed by a modern industrial society, and the system of socialist planning is not subject to the diseases of chronic overproduction and mass unemployment which acted with such explosive force in capitalist Germany and the fear of which drives the ruling class of capitalist America to welcome an expensive cold war.

There was never any doubt about the aggressive intentions of Nazi Germany, and it was always easy to explain them in terms of compelling economic and social forces. In the case of Soviet Russia, there is no evidence of aggressive intentions, and it is easy to explain their *absence* in terms of compelling economic and social forces.

When confronted with these arguments, the average American shakes his head and says something like this: "Never mind your fancy explanations. What I'm interested in is the facts. Soviet expansion has been taking place right under your nose, and there's no sense in thinking up reasons why it couldn't have happened. What about eastern Europe? What about Czechoslovakia? What about China? And now what about Korea?"

The answer, of course, is very simple: With the negligible exception of a few line-of-supply troops in the countries between the USSR and the occupied zones of Germany and Austria, there are no Soviet forces in any of these countries. Eastern European countries are governed by eastern Europeans; it was Czech Communists, with the support of many Czech Social Democrats, who took over in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948; Mao Tse-tung is as much a Chinese leader as Abraham Lincoln was an American leader; and in Korea, ironically, it is not Russian soldiers who are fighting, but American soldiers.

Most Americans, let it be said to the shame of our press and radio, do not know these facts, and it is probably a reasonable assumption that many of them, if they were properly informed, would change their views not only about international affairs but also about the world policy of the United States. But our rulers know these facts well enough, and still they stick stubbornly to the theory of Russian expansionism. How can we explain this?

The answer—and this is the key to everything—is that they identify Communism with the Soviet Union. The spread of Communism is equated with Russian expansion; any revolution under Communist leadership is held to be Russian aggression; every Communist party is regarded as merely a Russian fifth column. Once you make these assumptions, you can of course find plenty of evidence of Russian expansionism. There is no doubt that Communism has been growing by leaps and bounds in many parts of the world, and especially in Asia; most, perhaps all, genuine social revolutions in recent years have been under Communist leadership; and Communist parties, some very small and weak to be sure, are active in every country that has been caught up in the stream of modern history. If Communism=Russia is a true equation, then indeed it must be admitted that Russia is a very expansive country.

But it is *not* a true equation, and to use it as the basis of your analysis of the world situation is to make sure in advance that you will become completely confused and disoriented. Communism is a political expression of a revolutionary movement which originated more than a hundred years ago in the then-most-advanced capitalist countries of western Europe. This movement was in the strictest sense the creation of capitalism: it was born of the contradictions of capitalism, and its supreme aim was to replace capitalism (private ownership of the means of production and unplanned production for profit) by socialism (public ownership of the means of production and planned production for use). It spread wherever capitalism spread, that is to say, into every nook and cranny of the earth. It first succeeded in its aim in Tsarist Russia, in the years following the Revolution of 1917 and under the leadership of the Communist Party. Its success in Russia was of two kinds: first, it won and held power; and second, it built up the productive capacity of a backward country with incredible energy and speed and without the help of more advanced countries. This success fired the imagination of the masses in other countries, especially backward countries, and laid the basis for the quick spread of socialist ideas and the ready acceptance of Communist leadership.

This, and not some imaginary Russian expansionism, is the basic dynamic force of our time. The real conflict is not between Soviet

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Russia and the United States but between socialism and capitalism, and this conflict cuts across all national boundaries and reaches into every aspect of social life. In the field of international relations it manifests itself *at the present stage of development* as a conflict between two blocs of states, the socialist states and the capitalist states, each led by its most powerful member. But this is the *form* of the conflict not its *content*, and to assume that it can be understood by analogy with earlier conflicts that have had the same form is wholly wrong and misleading.

Not only is the spread of socialism not identical with Russian expansionism, but in the deepest sense the two are incompatible. Long ago Friedrich Engels laid down the principle that "the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing." (Letter to Karl Kautsky, Nov. 12, 1882.) And it is a principle that the Soviet leaders have strictly observed. It is true that in the course of the great defensive war against Nazi Germany (it is worth noting that Engels immediately added that the principle we have just cited "by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds") the Soviet Union cleared the ground for revolutionary forces and helped them to power in the eastern European countries, but that is an entirely different thing from waging an aggressive war to impose socialism on another country. In the years since World War II, Soviet forces have at no time overstepped the military limits that were agreed upon during the war by the major Allies; in all countries the advance of socialism has been the work of indigenous forces. It would be foolish to assume that the Soviet leaders have behaved in this way because of some abstract devotion to non-intervention in the affairs of other countries, or even because they have been afraid of the international repercussions which might follow from intervention. The real reason is that they know that an attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to impose socialism on other countries would turn the masses away from socialism and against the Soviet Union—in other words, that such an attempt would be self-defeating and doomed to failure.

But what about the position of the Soviet leadership in the international Communist movement? Don't Communists in other countries follow the Soviet line? And doesn't this prove that the spread of Communism is after all equivalent to Russian expansion?

Of course the Soviet Union occupies a position of leadership in the world Communist movement, and obviously Communists in other countries follow the Soviet line. But neither the leadership nor the followership is based on force. The Soviet position is based on the achievements of socialism in the USSR, and Communists in other countries follow the Soviet line because they believe in it. As the case

of Tito proves, there is no way the Soviet Union can keep foreign Communists in line unless they are willing to be kept in line, and that means, we are probably safe in assuming, unless they find it to their own interest to stay in line. Clearly, this is a very large and difficult sociological and political problem, but we believe that a modest acquaintance with the relevant facts is enough to show that the power of the Soviet Union over other countries (and, of course, every big country has *some* power over other countries) has nothing in common with the power which Hitler established over the countries he conquered. The conclusion stands that the spread of socialism, even under exclusively Communist leadership, is a historical process of a wholly different kind from the aggressive expansionism of an imperialist power.

Let us formulate as baldly and concisely as we can the essence of this difference: An imperialist power expands by attacking and conquering, occupying and ruling other countries. Socialism expands through revolutions in countries where the existing social order is rotten and weak.

We can now see why the American ruling-class policy of treating the expansion of socialism as though it were imperialist aggression leads to such appalling blunders—blunders, we must emphasize, even from the point of view of the ruling class itself.

These blunders are of two fundamental kinds. First, our government, in attempting to check what it regards as aggression, is in reality trying to maintain the status quo in precisely the areas where it is weakest and least able to maintain itself. Second, our government in attempting to arm the United States and its western European allies against the (non-existent) threat of direct Russian aggression in Europe, is wasting an ever larger part of the productive power of world capitalism and hence hastening the day when further areas will be ripe for socialist revolution (alias indirect Russian aggression). These blunders are mutually reinforcing and cumulative in their effects. Every revolution in Asia is taken as a sign of increased Russian aggressiveness and hence as proof of the need not only to commit forces to put the revolution down but also to redouble the armament effort in the United States and Europe. Neither action has any real chance of success; both alienate masses of people, weaken capitalism as a whole, and hasten the coming of more revolutions.

Should we as socialists welcome this degenerative process which can end only in the exhaustion and death of world capitalism?

Of course not. It is a horrible process which at best entails immeasurable agony and suffering for hundreds of millions of people and at worst may lead the rulers of America, in their mounting

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

frustration, to the desperate and frightful expedient of atomic warfare. And if as socialists we must passionately oppose these things, as Americans we must do everything within our power to save our country from the irreparable national disaster which now threatens us all regardless of class position or political beliefs.

It is impossible in a relatively brief note to discuss the longer-range aspects of a program to save America—for it is nothing less than that we must now think in terms of—but the immediate tasks are obvious and urgent. (We will return to the problems that lie ahead in future issues.)

First, the Korean war must be liquidated as quickly as possible. This can be accomplished only after the United Nations has been reconstituted by the admission of the real government of China. The future of Korea can no more be settled without the participation of China than the future of Mexico could be settled without the participation of the United States. Hence the most urgent task of all is to secure a reversal of our government's decision to exclude the Peking government from the United Nations.

Second, the United States must withdraw from the extremely dangerous commitment to hold Formosa for Chiang Kai-shek. Not until this is done shall we be free of the *imminent* threat of a terrible war between the United States and not only China but practically the whole continent of Asia.

Third, the United States must stop the futile effort to maintain rotten regimes all over Asia. Instead we can and should—with general benefit to *all* classes in the country—adopt a policy of friendship and business dealings on a basis of equality, with whatever regimes the Asian peoples themselves may establish, whether these regimes be capitalist, socialist, or Communist.

This is a strictly limited program. It would not settle all issues, even in the field of foreign policy. In fact, it leaves many, including all questions of western Europe and domestic rearming, entirely on the side. But it constitutes the absolute minimum necessary to halt the present mad rush to disaster. Moreover—and this is a point of the very highest importance—it is a program which already commands the backing of clear-headed people of many political tendencies in this country and which could quickly rally substantial, and probably preponderant, support in the United Nations.

In other words, this is a program which *could* become practical politics in this country in a relatively short time. Many Americans are waking up to the dangerous plight in which we now find ourselves. This is attested by statements from such varied, but still impeccably conservative, quarters as *The Wall Street Journal*, Walter

Lippmann, and Senator Byrd. No doubt there are also men in the Truman administration who understand at least some of the implications of the course on which the country is now embarked. But civic courage, and even leadership, are things which, since the death of FDR, we no longer expect in governmental circles. The administration has made political capital out of the red scare for so long, and has competed so hard with the McCarthys for the anti-Communist championship, that it can no longer even think of treating Communism and socialism and revolution as serious historical forces which have to be understood and lived with. We cannot look to the government for salvation; on the contrary, the nation can be saved only by forcing a new course on the government. And this, we believe, is well within the realm of political possibility.

What is most needed now is an articulate *and growing* public opinion in favor of the limited program outlined above—a program of halting the war in Korea and extricating ourselves from terribly dangerous and utterly futile commitments throughout the Far East. That and that alone could turn the tide and set the stage for a more constructive attack on all the other pressing problems which face the country. By taking a forthright stand in favor of this minimum program, by doing everything possible to arouse and educate the public to its awful urgency, the Left now has a chance to recoup some of the losses it has suffered in recent years.

The American people must be alerted to the threat to their national future, to the necessity of saving themselves. No one else can or will save them. For those who understand, there should be no thought of partisan advantage, no hesitation about working with anyone who realizes that his country's future is at stake. The partisan advantage will come later, and as a free gift, to whoever acts most energetically and effectively *now*.

(August 15, 1950)

Outside of socialism there is no salvation for mankind from war, hunger, and the further destruction of millions and millions of human beings.

—Lenin

CONTRAST IN GERMANY

BY BASIL DAVIDSON

The general picture of East Germany cultivated by the British press (and possibly also by the American press) is of a gray and silent land prostrate beneath the relentless Russian boot, a sector of the map withdrawn from civilization, a place of fear and hunger. It goes without saying that this picture bears no recognizable resemblance to reality. Nor would the opposite extreme—of a joyful land of generous and carefree democrats—do much better. As always, the truth lies somewhere between extreme interpretations; in the case of East Germany it is a median which is unusually hard to find.

Yet the truth about the social influences which mold and form the people of the German Democratic Republic, to give it its full title, is certainly easier to find than a year ago. "The time of successes has begun," declared Walter Ulbricht, the German Communist leader, towards the end of 1949. Having dismantled the superstructure of Nazi society and dug down into its foundations, the German Communists and the non-Communists who are working with them have begun to build new foundations and a superstructure of their own. Today it is possible to see—where a year ago it was possible only to infer—what the nature of this East German society is likely to be.

These visible signs of renewal do not go unnoticed in West Germany. A few months ago, early in May, a Christian-Democratic newspaper in the Federal Republic (that is, the Bonn Republic), the *Badische Neueste Nachrichten*, discovered after diligent search through official statistics in Bonn that as many as 100,000 Germans, during 1949, had gone from West to East Germany. The figure is surprisingly large, and may be an exaggeration (although it is hard to see why this particular newspaper should wish to exaggerate); but there is no doubt that a flow of Germans eastward did begin in 1949, and that it continues at what is probably a growing rate. Most of these eastward-flowing Germans, furthermore, are skilled workers and professional people such as doctors. Their reason for going, as far as anyone knows, is simply their desire to find work which is offered in the East but cannot be found in the West.

Basil Davidson is an expert on foreign affairs and staff writer for the British Socialist weekly The New Statesman and Nation. His article on "Italy and the Marshall Plan" appeared in the December, 1949, issue of MR.

Early this year the Lord Mayor and Councillors of the West German city of Stuttgart accepted an invitation from their colleagues of the City Council of Dresden. The acceptance of this invitation, although frowned upon in official circles, may be taken as an expression of a feeling common throughout Germany that loyalty to the idea of German unity should take precedence over loyalty to one side or the other in the cold war. Other groups and individuals have also received and accepted similar invitations, and have returned to their cities in the West with new and disturbing things to say. Bonn did not like it, and does not like it. "The Chancellor [Adenauer]," reported Drew Middleton in the *New York Times* of May 7 last, after an interview on the subject, "said that he was 'somewhat worried' about the activities of the East German government. 'Invitations to agricultural, economic, and scientific meetings in East Germany,' the Chancellor complained, 'are being accepted and the people in West Germany fall for their Communist tricks,' he declared." Middleton further reported that

Such visiting causes him [Adenauer] more worry than the Communist activities within the territory of the Bonn Republic. . . . 'In my opinion, it is superfluous for the Lord Mayor of Stuttgart and the City Council to accept an invitation by the Lord Mayor of Dresden and *vice versa*,' he said. 'This situation is impossible.'

One can understand the Chancellor's anxiety. His whole case rests on persuading the Germans in the West that massive unemployment, falling standards of living for the employed, reviving nationalism and anti-semitism, and all the apparatus of collapsing capitalism, are somehow inevitable, by no means the fault of his government, and largely the consequence of Russian maleficence. Yet the Lord Mayor and Council of Stuttgart, an all-party body of the highest probity, have the tactlessness, in returning from their week's stay in Dresden, to declare that things are going splendidly in the East. It is little less than high treason.

The *Amtsblatt der Stadt Stuttgart* (Proceedings of the Stuttgart City Council) of February 17th, 1950, reports the whole debate. I will give only two or three quotations, but they are fairly representative of all that was said. Thus Councillor Stetter, of the SPD (Social Democrats) declared that: "I am quite convinced that in the East Zone they are doing all they can, first and foremost, to improve the lot of the working people. . . . The social changes in the East simply cannot be denied existence by closing our eyes to them." He added: "I simply can't image a Remer or a Hedler Case in the East Zone." (Remer and Hedler are two notorious neo-Nazis whose

C O N T R A S T I N G E R M A N Y

activities in the Federal Republic have lately achieved the status of a public scandal.)

Frau Euchner, also Social Democrat (and neither she nor Stetter, by the way, belong to any "fellow-traveling" group on the Left of the SPD), put it rather differently. "In the East Zone," she said, "they are working on building up an entirely new social order. These people are being systematically taught a new way of thought. There is taking place in the East Zone a gradual spiritual re-education (*Umschulung*)."¹ Later she said: "There isn't a trade from which women are excluded. The claim for equality of treatment is really met. There is equal pay for equal work. . . ."

The Christian Democratic members of the delegation were less enthusiastic, though still impressed, and the Communist delegates were more enthusiastic; but all, unanimously, concluded their debate by deciding to invite their colleagues from Dresden to come to Stuttgart. And the reason why Chancellor Adenauer does not like that, needless to say, is not because the Dresdeners will see the chaos and unemployment of the Federal Republic, but because the Dresdeners will undoubtedly be asked questions about their own lives, and will answer in a manner by no means convenient to Bonn.

Such examples could be multiplied. The East German authorities have made a special point of inviting parties of children, many of them destitute, from West Germany. Reporting on conditions at the dismantled steelworks of Watenstedt-Salzgitter, whence many children have visited the nearby eastern zone, a writer in the Catholic *Frankfurter Hefte* for May 1950 says:

You have to talk to parents and children before you can even imagine what a profound effect is achieved by the propaganda of the Communists. A mother with three children, her husband killed in the war, herself out of work, is asked whether she would like to send one of her children for a holiday to Thuringia [in the East]. She hesitates, but then, influenced by her extremity of need, she gives a worried and reluctant assent. Weeks later her child comes back—healthy, enthusiastic, with a new dress, with underwear and shoes to match, and with the experience of having for once eaten her fill, of having for once escaped the everlasting poverty and its quelling climate. The other children hear about all this at school; they hear the songs of the *Jungen Pioniere* [the children's organization of the Democratic Republic], and they admire the red silk scarf with which their lucky friend has come back. . . .

The next 250 are eager for the day of departure. The parents this time are happy, and their fears are forgotten. . . .

At the end of May, crowning all these visits, about 25,000 girls and boys voyaged illegally across the zonal frontiers to take part in the Whitsuntide youth festivities in Berlin. Many of them, returning via Helmstedt after several days of jollification, found their entry into the Federal Republic barred by police and by neo-Nazi hooligans. Many of these children at Helmstedt had their blue shirts torn from off their backs. They are not likely to forget the experience.

It might be, of course, that these activities are of a purely propagandist nature, and fail to reflect the reality of economic conditions in East Germany. Here one can only rely for a judgment on one's own information; a diligent reading of the abundant sources of printed information available in all parts of Germany, not excluding East Germany; and the official statistics of the eastern government.

Apart from the fact that structural unemployment in East Germany is almost totally absent, and that cyclical unemployment is generally agreed to be small, there seems no doubt that production has in fact achieved a steady improvement over the past two years. Overall production is now slightly above the level of 1936, whereas in West Germany it is still about 90 percent, with unemployment at rather more than two millions.

The important point is not the exactitude of these figures—their rate of change is in any case fairly rapid—but the achievement of the East German authorities in absorbing into their economic system that broad flood of refugees from further east who came into the zone (as also into the British and American zones) in 1945 and 1946. It is a favorite argument of the Bonn government to attribute the massive unemployment of the Federal Republic to the flow of refugees from the East; yet in 1949, when the number of refugees westward could not have much exceeded the returning flow eastward, unemployment in the West went up from about one to about two millions. While little or nothing is done—and not done, one must suspect, deliberately—to absorb and distribute the refugees who still cluster together in Schleswig-Holstein where unemployment is over 25 percent), in Bavaria (unemployment nearly 20 percent), and in other primarily rural areas, the displaced Germans in East Germany have disappeared as separate communities and are once more a part of the general economic process.

What is the nature of this economic process? There are few more interesting questions in the whole of contemporary Europe. In attempting an answer one must reject, once again, extreme interpretations.

Destruction of the old social order in East Germany has consisted in four fundamental measures.

CONTRAST IN GERMANY

First, the landed gentry, pillar of German conservatism and *fons et origo* of the Officers' Corps, was swept away as a class (for the individuals have of course survived) by the land reform. About 7,500,000 acres were distributed among 500,000 peasant families; 1,700,000 acres went to 119,000 landless peasants and their families.

Second, all industrial undertakings considered as forming part of monopolist concentrations, or whose owners were considered Nazis or war criminals, were expropriated without compensation, and handed over to the ownership of the respective *Laender*. These *Laenderized* (for they cannot strictly be called "nationalized") industries formed, in the spring of this year, only eight percent of all the industrial undertakings in East Germany, but they accounted for as much as 55 per cent of industrial production.

Third, there was a determined attempt at reforming the civil service. Exceedingly difficult, this was not regarded as being complete until well into 1947, largely because of the extreme difficulty of finding and training enough new personnel. Two principles were followed: first, that local legislation of a chauvinist or Nazi character (and there was much of it) should be declared invalid and displaced by new legislation that was democratic in spirit; second, that a new civil service would have to be drawn from the ranks of the industrial workers and peasants.

An upheaval of this magnitude implied confusion for a time; and there is no doubt that there was plenty of that. By now, however, one has the impression that the new civil servants have learnt their jobs, that the new legislation is shaking into place, and that life begins to move forward at an easier pace. It is among the more remarkable phenomena of post-war Europe to enter an official bureau of some kind or other in East Germany and to find yourself directed not to the traditional German civil servant, with all his cold-blooded contempt for humanity and servility to superiors, but to a young man or woman with a worried, homely look, a pile of dog-eared reference books on the desk, and an almost miraculous determination to behave like a human being.

Fourth, but by no means least, the processes of upheaval in the civil service were applied to education. It seems probable that the East German authorities now attach more importance to this than to anything else. There is a tendency to say that the generations now mature in Germany are more or less lost to the future, that the poison of Nazism has gone too deep for them to be saved, or at least for them to be made into creative and self-confident human beings again, and that it is only to the rising generation that one can usefully turn. Certain it is that the training and welfare of adolescents and young children take first place in the East Germany of today.

No one doubts that this is so, neither the children themselves, who sit in new or newly-decorated school-rooms under new teachers reading new textbooks, nor the parents who see their children well fed and well read—it is not even doubted by the Western authorities, who say that this Communist attention to youth is "very clever—a typically Communist attempt at nubbling the future of Germany. Just like Hitler, in fact."

The figures, once more, are approximate; but broadly it appears that one will be safe in saying that over three quarters of teachers now employed in all grades of the East German educational system have come into the profession *since 1945*. At the same time, the character of the school children and the students has changed: it is claimed, and my own observations bear this out, that in universities and technical high schools today as many as 35 percent of the students are of working-class and peasant origin. After a period of half-baked teaching and half-baked learning, the great and necessary change is now approaching completion; many new teachers have learnt their jobs, others are being trained over an adequate period, and incoming students are now going through a full course of study. It was perhaps with reference to this as much as to anything else that Ulbricht said last November that the time of successes had begun.

This educational system is worth looking into a little more carefully, for upon it depends much of the claim that the character of German society can be changed and is being changed.

Something of the aspirations and the difficulties of the East German Communists can be inferred from Ulbricht's report on the new Youth Law, which was introduced in his name in May 1950.

Young people are apparently being put into administrative and executive jobs as widely as possible. The Deputy Lord Mayor of the great city of Leipzig is 23; as many as 240 "young people" are in leading jobs in the communications network. But the *Land* Government of Saxony reports that "out of 195 youthful mayors not a single one has gone through a training course." To this the Ministry of the Interior replies that "the number of entrants to training schools is being steadily raised. . . ." In the publicly-owned industries, up to the middle of May, the authorities had appointed 300 assistant managers who had qualified strictly on the grounds of economic efficiency (in other words, no social nepotism). In all the industries of the Democratic Republic there are at present 1,200 professional training classes with 40,000 trainees. Whereas in 1938 there were in this area of Germany 400,000 youths in technical and management schools, with an average weekly instructional period of five hours, in 1949 there were 750,000 with an

CONTRAST IN GERMANY

average of nine hours, and in 1950 there are to be 850,000 with eleven hours. The number of technical schools for training in industry has risen from 165 on June 1, 1949, to 275 on May 1, 1950, and would rise by September 1, 1950, to 320 schools.

There are complaints of bureaucratic obstruction. Too many public services have taken possession of school buildings. This, says Ulbricht, must be reversed at once. In Sachsen-Anhalt, at such-and-such a place, the mayor is living in the former kindergarten. A notice to quit was ignored, "from which it may be inferred that this mayor has no intention of meeting the requirements of the Youth Law." In Thuringia the People's Police is using 15 schoolbuildings and has yet to be convinced that it must evacuate them. At Frost, in Brandenburg, the police are occupying the middle-school and the "gymnasium"—"which means that children are having to walk an extra five kilometers to school."

Another part of the same law provides for the establishment of children's libraries, a children's theatre in Berlin, a special publishing house for children's books, and for prizes to be given to those who write such books—at which "a good beginning is being made by Anna Seghers, Gustav von Wangenheim, Johannes Becher, and Hans Eisler." To mention only two of these, Anna Seghers is probably the most distinguished novelist now living in Germany, and Becher is a German poet with a European reputation. Nothing, runs the principle, is to be too good for the rising generation; for it is upon the rising generation that everything must be built, and built to endure.

Having thus seen these fundamental social changes well on their way, the Russians decreed that all further proceedings against "lesser Nazis"—the so-called *Mitläufer* or fellow-travelers, as distinct from the "big Nazis" or *Aktivisten*—should end. This was in August 1947, well ahead of similar action by the western occupying Powers. These lesser Nazis, it was further decreed, should now be brought back into the stream of public and private life. The war criminals, it was argued, had been punished; the power of former Nazis to do harm, furthermore, was gone, because the economic and political influences upon which this power had rested were also gone. To leave these former Nazis in a sort of condemned isolation, it was said, would be far more dangerous to the social fabric than to bring them carefully back into circulation.

A party was founded to give these people and their like a spiritual home. This was the National Democratic Party, in which many former Nazis may now be found. Two years later, in August 1949, Ulbricht could say: "We have today in the Soviet zone not a few former active Nazis who are doing responsible jobs. The active Nazis

could show they had rendered definite services. One could not say this of some members of the CDU and LDP [the other middle-class parties in the Eastern Zone] who squinted in the direction of London and Washington. . . ."

It is upon achievements of this order that the East German leaders base their claim to have produced a peaceful and potentially prosperous society. They point to the upward-moving figures of production and consumption, to the absence of unemployment, to the turning away from extremist nationalism and anti-semitism, and to the growing sensation—which cannot be dismissed as merely the product of skillful propaganda—that a new and peaceful world opens at last upon the German horizon. They are proud of the increasing mechanization of agriculture, of the growing influence of moral and material incentives upon the quantity and quality of production, of the steady flow of technicians from the schools and universities; and even of the relentless driving energy which seems to animate the handful of Germans who sit all day and much of the night at their ministerial desks in Berlin.

Anything less like Utopia, clearly, would be hard to find. Equally clearly, the contrast with the Federal Republic is unmistakable. In the West, as every eye-witness knows and many have said, all is slipping back into the moral and economic morass which produced Hitlerism. Scarcely a day passes but some new scandal comes to light, some monumental piece of corruption emerges for a moment into the horrified light of day, some convicted Nazi steps into a new job where the essential pattern of power remains unchanged, some pillar of the past rises once more through the dust of maladministration. You will find there all the signs of perversity and misdirected power which led to Nazism; even anti-semitism is back in its accustomed place. The Jewish community in Düsseldorf—a mere handful of nervous people—lately handed me a list of Jewish cemeteries desecrated since 1946. There were 82 cemeteries on this list; but only one of them was in the Soviet Zone.

As sin when it is finished is said to bring forth death, so capitalism when it is finished brings forth monopoly. And one might as well quarrel with that plain fact as blame thorns because they do not produce grapes, or thistles because they are barren of figs.

—William Clarke in his original Fabian Essay.

NOTES ON LEFT PROPAGANDA

BY LEO HUBERMAN

Agitation, based on information, brings lasting converts to socialism; agitation, based on exhortation, does not. Failure to understand this simple fact is perhaps the chief defect of Left propaganda in the United States.

Truth is on our side. It is the job of the socialist propagandist to present that truth in its clearest and most persuasive form. It seems a pity to have to point out, at this late date, that jargon and name-calling neither clarify nor persuade. The use of Left "short-hand" such as "fascist beast" or "running dogs of imperialism" may be the easiest way out for the overworked Left writer but it makes no sense to those readers not already in the charmed Left circle. And how often have even those of us who are convinced socialists been embarrassed and made uncomfortable by the "arguments" in the Left press!

Yet the truth is so overwhelmingly on our side that we can understate the case with far greater effect than is gained by the overstatement of which so many Left writers are guilty. What is the need for exaggeration or distortion when the facts shout our story so convincingly? And those facts are obtainable from unimpeachable sources—either out of the mouths of reactionaries or their spokesmen, or from government publications.

Do we want to prove that the mass of people in the United States are not as well off as Right propagandists would have us believe in their perpetual paeans of praise to our "high standard of living?" Government income figures in official publications prove the point. On August 4, 1948 Mr. Leon Keyserling, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, testified before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, that:

About 50 percent of all families had incomes below the \$3200 a year estimated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to be necessary to maintain an urban family of four at a reasonably satisfactory standard of living. Between a quarter and a third of all families had incomes of less than \$2,000 a year, and more than 10 percent had incomes of less than \$1,000 a year.

I submit that a few figures such as these are much more convincing to those who have not yet seen the light than tons of invective which serve only to annoy the reader or listener.

Do we want to suggest to the uninitiated that there is a perpetual conflict between capitalists and workers and that what is good for the workers will be opposed by the capitalists? A quotation from Marx or Lenin won't be convincing. But one from a big capitalist will—one like this from Mr. Charles Luckman, former president of Lever Brothers, to the ninth annual convention of the Super Market Institute on November 7, 1946:

Why is that during the past 20 years American Business has become identified in the public mind as opposed to everything that spells greater security, well-being, or peace of mind for the little guy? . . .

We got the reputation we have because, by and large, we earned it. How? Well, we declared war on collective bargaining. We actually opposed increased taxes for education. We fought health and safety ordinances. The record proves that we battled child labor legislation. We yipped and yowled against minimum wage laws. We struggled against unemployment insurance. We decried Social Security, and currently we are kicking the hell out of legislative proposals to provide universal sickness and accident insurance. . . .

Where on the record is there a single example to show that Big Business ever initiated a legislative program of benefits for the workers? Is it not clear that they have always waited until they were asked or forced to do something?

Do we want to make our uninformed American aware of the relationship between the state and the ruling class? It's no good telling him what Stalin says on the subject. He won't believe it—any more than we are likely to believe Mr. Churchill on the advantages of empire rule to the colonial people. But he will at least begin to think seriously about the matter if we tell him what a President of the United States wrote on the subject while he was in office—Woodrow Wilson in 1913: "The masters of the government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States."

Do we want to teach the evils of capitalist monopoly? What left-winger has ever driven home the point more forcefully than the Temporary National Economic Committee of the United States Congress: "A more nearly perfect mechanism for making the poor poorer and the rich richer could scarcely be devised."

No need to labor the point. The material we need is available.

NOTES ON LEFT PROPAGANDA

Irrefutable facts and conclusive opinions from unquestionable sources can be obtained to bolster our arguments. They are not always easy to find—but they are worth the time and effort needed to unearth them, for they carry conviction as nothing else can.

Digging up the supporting material is only the first part of the job. Since nearly all the avenues for reaching the people are firmly in the other side's hands, our own effectiveness will be measured by the imagination and resourcefulness we use to put our material across. Let me cite two concrete illustrations. The fight for higher wages for workers is a never-ending one. The usual arguments are familiar and, for that reason, generally fall on deaf ears. On June 7, 1950 the *National Guardian*, using 1949 figures collected by the Labor Research Association, dressed up the old argument for workers in a more striking manner in a box on the front page. Here are the first three items:

<i>What the Boss Got</i>	<i>The Firm</i>	<i>What You Got</i>
\$209,450	Amer. Tel. & Tel. Chairman Walter Gifford	\$2,693
586,100	General Motors Pres. Charles E. Wilson	3,430
460,748	Amer. Tobacco Pres. Vincent Riggio	2,409

This, I suggest, is agitation through information—the best kind of propaganda. It is more effective than paragraphs of name-calling about the lousy company and the greedy boss.

[The *Guardian* could have made the case even better by making the huge sums paid to the bosses easier to grasp. Take the third figure, for example—\$460,748, that's too huge for the imagination to cope with. But break it down to a weekly figure and make the comparison and here is what you get:

Pres. Riggio's Weekly Wages	Worker's Weekly Wages
\$8,860.53	\$46.32

Now, make some further pertinent analyses:

1. President Riggio gets more than three times as much in one week as the worker gets in a year.
2. He gets \$1265.79 every day, Sundays included. That's 27 times as much as the worker gets each week.
3. He gets \$52.74 every hour of every day around the clock, waking or sleeping—\$6 more than the worker gets each week.]

In 1949 when the CIO United Steelworkers of America was

MONTHLY REVIEW

battling the steel companies for an increase in old-age pensions, the *Daily Compass* carried a story by Steve Fischer which is a perfect illustration of what I mean by agitation through information. The headline ran

THEY'VE BOTH WORKED HARD FOR U.S. STEEL

Benjamin Fairless' Pension:	\$76,537.00
Andrew Girasek's Pension:	3.21

And the story—a gem of its kind—began this way:

Benjamin Fairless and Andrew Girasek have devoted their lives to the United States Steel Corp.

They have been loyal, hard-working men. As such they are both deserving of pensions—and they get them.

Fairless is going to retire in a few years from his job as president of the corporation.

His pension: \$76,537 a year.

Girasek is a few years older than Fairless, so, after 44 years of work as a rigger, he retired two years ago.

His pension: 29 cents a month, or \$3.21 a year.

Fischer told the story straight and the *Compass* played it straight, with pictures of Girasek (caption, "For him: \$3.21 a year") and Fairless ("For him: \$76,537 a year"), and photostats of two letters from the company to Girasek informing him of the amount due him and taking the "opportunity to wish you many enjoyable years of your retirement." The only name-calling in connection with the story came from the reader when he was finished—which is precisely the effect to be desired.

Sticking to the truth is a good principle for the Left not only when it seeks to convert others to its side, but also when it talks to its own followers. If a Left candidate runs for office and hasn't a chance, why not say so? The answer that is usually given—that people won't vote for a loser—shows a lack of faith in the very working class whose virtues the Left leaders sing so loudly. And what of the disillusionment that follows when the extravagant claims are shown to have been hollow?

The recent mayoralty election in New York is a good case in point. Considering the hysteria of the times, the 350,000 votes cast for Vito Marcantonio was a truly impressive showing—in its proper perspective it was something to be proud of. But in the light of the fantastically reckless predictions that Marcantonio would win, the good showing was turned into a defeat.

It's not true that everything must be presented to workers in blacks and whites. There is absolutely no justification for the belief

NOTES ON LEFT PROPAGANDA

that they won't comprehend the grays. Why must every Left candidate be sold as a god? Why not state specifically his virtues and his defects, and why he is to be supported in preference to candidates X and Y? To do otherwise leads to hero worship which in 99 cases out of a 100 must end in disillusionment and despair since so few leaders are of the stuff of which heroes are made. There has been far too much emphasis on Left leaders, far too little on Left philosophy. The time and energy spent on extolling the virtues of this or that Left leader would more properly be spent on expounding the principles for which the Left stands. That is the only way to build a core of steadfast people who know the score—and without such a solid base, success can never be achieved by the Left.

When MR printed the article "Cooperation On the Left" we received a few letters attacking us, not because the criticism we made was not just, but because "such criticism plays into the hands of the capitalist class." Has this familiar argument any merit?

It may be that the capitalist class can use such criticism against us, but we must take that risk. For the primary question we must always face is: What is the most effective way of convincing doubters? And the answer is, surely, that you can't possibly persuade anyone to have confidence in you unless you are honest enough to admit what he knows to be true. How far can you get with a person who doubts the value of trade unions if you won't concede that some unions are racketeer-controlled? Why should he listen to you any longer if you won't admit obvious truths? He won't listen. He will be antagonized, and rightly so. Those Left propagandists who refuse to admit mistakes, who cover up weaknesses with a lot of double-talk instead of admitting them in a forthright manner, lose the respect of their listeners and the opportunity for further education is thereby ended.

A fundamental socialist principle that cannot be emphasized too much or too often is that the enemy is the capitalist system, not the capitalists. It is a mistake to paint individuals as fiends (the current Number One Fiend seems to be John Foster Dulles) but for whom all would be well. That is simply not true. Capitalists act as they do because they are driven to do so by the system. We are not interested in arousing people to hatred of evildoers. We are interested in getting people to see the need for replacing the system.

Or are we? So little socialism is preached by the Left that one is forced to wonder. Left propagandists have discarded (correctly, of course) the hopelessly sectarian position of constantly talking socialism while being aloof from the day to day struggle. But they have gone to the other extreme of concentrating almost exclusively on

the day to day struggle while hardly ever explaining its relation to socialism.

Isn't the belief current in Left circles that getting people to vote for progressive candidates, to fight for peace, to be active in consumer organizations, to protest the suppression of civil liberties, is to move them toward socialism? And isn't it true—as the leaders of scientific socialism have shown again and again—that these struggles, of themselves, will *not* make socialists unless the lessons are drawn, the moral made plain? A vehicle toward the goal, yes, but only if it is steered in that direction. If not, it is a vehicle which never reaches the goal but comes to a halt in a bog of reformism.

No one can really be counted on our side who has not had a solid grounding in the fundamentals of socialism. And that takes time. It means working with people, playing with them, becoming their friends—and always teaching them. It means educating them through the day to day struggle, not only to be against capitalism, but to be *for* socialism. It means converting people to socialism not in some distant future, but now.

DUTY COMES FIRST

Mr. McCulloch [*Congressman from Ohio*]. *Well, do you think, Dr. Clark [Council of Economic Advisers], that over the next five or ten years there is much likelihood that we are going to have a full-employment economy in America?*

Mr. Clark. *Oh, yes; I have to take that position, Congressman, because that is our duty. I do, yes.*

Mr. McCulloch. *I am pleased that there is someone who has that optimistic approach. We have never had such a condition in America in recent years except during wartime, have we? Is it correct, that in wartime or immediately thereafter, when there was a pent-up demand which had not been satisfied during the emergencies, that was the only time we had this?*

Hearings before the Celler Monopoly Committee, July 13, 1949

THE LEFT NEEDS INTELLECTUAL CLARIFICATION

BY A UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF ECONOMICS

A commonplace of political theory is that a fundamental reform movement must be built around a central doctrine, a philosophy, if it is to achieve that sustained unity which is necessary to carry it through a generation or a century or more of effective struggle against entrenched institutions. Otherwise reform movements become opportunistic.

A further commonplace is that American radicalism has generally lacked such a doctrine, and that radical political movements here have been plagued with short-lived opportunism. Without engaging in a digressive supporting argument I would contend that this was as true of the Progressive Party of 1948 as of its predecessors. It was built around a man, not around a doctrine.

The central question to which we must address ourselves is, then, why American radicals have lacked a sustaining philosophy. The answer could take many forms. For present purposes we may emphasize the lack of a theory of social causation and trend. Since socialist thought provides the framework for such a theory, we are led to ask why socialism has not become, in an Americanized version, the philosophical core of the American Left.

One reason is that it has had a strong European flavor, meaning that it was formulated and taught to meet the relatively rigid class conditions of Europe. In the 19th century, conditions here were different. In the 20th century, American labor has assumed more of the traditional characteristics of a European proletariat and might, therefore, be considered ready for socialism. Yet it shows few signs of being so. This is partly because half or three-quarters of a century of non- or anti-socialist thought is now a stubborn social fact, a tradition. And it is partly because the favoring development of a better-organized, more self-conscious labor movement has been accompanied by a development unfavorable to the popularity of socialism in the United States—the rise of socialism in the country which has become its chief power rival, Russia.

My second reason, then, is that the growing tendency to identify socialism as a theory of social causation with the particular social and political system of Russia is a serious handicap to the develop-

ment of an American radical doctrine based on socialist theory. There is no need to expiate upon the inaccuracies of American opinion about Russia, or upon the irrationality of conceiving Russian society as the prototype of socialism everywhere. But it is perhaps worthy of reflection that the persistence of these views is due in part to the actions of socialists themselves. They do *not* systematically and coolly endeavor to describe Russia as it is; rather they tend to idealize it. And they *do* tend to prove that socialism works by drawing demonstrations from Russian experience. If Americans think that socialists want to make the United States over in the model of the USSR, isn't it partly the socialists' own fault? Is it not, in any case, a serious obstacle to the acceptance of socialist thought in the United States? One may question, in this connection, the wisdom of de-emphasizing the socialist achievements of Britain and maintaining silence on those of Yugoslavia. It would be equally true to emphasize that both countries have progressed toward socialism. This, and the fact that they have done so without Russian aid would foster more balanced thinking about the transition to socialism in the United States.

The initial conclusion to which this leads is that Russia's role in the modern world has not been adequately taken into account by the American Left, and until it is there can and will be no co-operation on the Left. Some of the American Left have adopted the easy road of Russophobia, with the concomitant evils of red-baiting and all that goes with it. At the other extreme are a few Russophiles. The middle position is undefined and hence occupied only by those who have no place else to go. To define this middle position it is necessary, first, to decide what the role of Russia really is; secondly, to define American objectives in the light of this interpretation; thirdly, to apply socialist theory to the problem of achieving these American objectives. This flies in the face of the international traditions of socialism. But given the strength of nationalist traditions, it can hardly be avoided.

The alternative is to assume that Russian socialists and American socialists can never disagree because they are both socialists. This is scarcely a tenable assumption. The task of independent socialists therefore becomes one of discovering the sources of disagreement between Russian and American socialists, analyzing them, and devising peaceful means for either living with them or resolving them.

If this task is not assumed, if this central issue is evaded, it is hard to see how there can ever be an "American socialism." Unless a serious effort is also made to apply socialist theory to the American scene, along lines suggested in the July issue of MR by "A Graduate Student in Economics," it is doubtful that American radicalism can

THE LEFT NEEDS INTELLECTUAL CLARIFICATION

ever achieve philosophical unity. The first of these aims may be defined as the differentiation of American socialist thought, the second as its analytical application. Neither has yet received sufficient attention.

A further and broader conclusion to which this analysis leads is that the American Left needs intellectual, especially political, clarification more than anything else. There is, or was before Korea, no great difficulty in finding limited legislative objectives on which socialists and liberals could cooperate. The difficulty is to find a continuing, long-range program on which to cooperate. This will not be easy. The nature and difficulty of the task can best be seen if we imagine that all elements on the Left awoke one morning and found themselves in agreement (as urged by MR, June 1950, p. 39) that "capitalism has no future," and that the United States should "play its rightful part in building the one socialist world of the future." Suppose, further, that they agreed on going ahead with "public ownership of the decisive sectors of the economy" and with "comprehensive planning of production for the benefit of the producers themselves" (MR, May 1949, p. 1); and also that the socialist movement should be "rooted in the working class" and should carry forward "the splendid traditions of American democracy." (MR, June 1950, p. 34)

With all this measure of agreement, would there be cooperation on the Left? No doubt there would be an initial common effort to draft a program of action. But would not this hopeful attempt to cooperate soon stumble over differences of opinion concerning the substantive translation of such concepts as "rightful part," "one socialist world," "comprehensive planning," "producers," "public ownership," "decisive sectors," "working class," "traditions of American democracy?" The reluctance of American labor leaders and intellectuals to embrace socialist thinking is due far less to a belief in the unalloyed virtues of private property, the rights of which they have often helped whittle away, than to doubt concerning the compatibility of extensive public ownership and central planning with (their version of) the traditions of American democracy. This doubt is the chief obstacle to cooperation on the Left. It grows with every extension of the American-Russian power conflict, for reasons indicated above. It must be resolved if the United States is to have an intellectually vigorous and politically effective Left. This can be done, first, by meeting the Russian issue, as already suggested; second, by attempting to provide concrete answers, in terms of the facts and values of American society, to the questions which are raised by the objectives of socialism. Essentially these are tasks of social analysis and political synthesis.

To expect political cooperation between those who operate on different political premises is scarcely reasonable. The problem is to forge a minimum set of common political premises which can link socialist and non-socialist elements of the Left. It will then become possible for socialists and liberals to cooperate, as they did under the New Deal, on measures which the former regard as transitional devices and the latter as a design for "progressive capitalism," but which both agree are compatible with American traditions.

In the December 1949 issue of MR, the editors said (p. 52): "Basically it comes down to a question of death vs. life. We are for life and we think everyone else would be too if they understood the alternatives. Hence we are more interested in harping on this issue than in worrying about *what kind of life*." This seems to me to be a mistaken attitude. More serious worrying about "what kind of life" is precisely what the American Left needs. This is the only way in which practical-minded people can come to understand the alternatives. It is the only way to save the Left from again muffing its chance with a program of opportunistic expedients.

I should like to see MR become a recognized medium for controversial discussion of those tough questions which are so easy to ask and so necessary, though difficult, to answer in widely acceptable terms.

ON THE QUESTION OF "MARXIST INFALLIBILITY"

BY HAROLD L. WHITE, CHICAGO

The articles concerning "Cooperation on the Left" in the July issue of MR were especially interesting to me. The following is confined to one point made by Allen H. Barton in "Unity with Communists Impossible Under Present Conditions." I am not a member of any political party. My views are the result of an intensive study of Marxist philosophy.

I have not read Mr. Belfrage's article, but it seems strange to me that the author talks about "Marxist infallibility." There are numerous references by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin regarding the human propensity to make mistakes. Lenin affirmed: "But only he

ON THE QUESTION OF MARXIST INFALLIBILITY

who never does anything never commits errors." The mere acceptance of Marxism does not save people from making mistakes. "It is not he who makes no mistakes who is wise. There are no such men nor can there be. He is wise who makes not very serious mistakes and knows how to correct them easily and quickly." The correct procedure, according to Marxism, is to make as few errors as possible, acknowledge them when they occur, and rectify them immediately. In fact in the Soviet Union a special principle has been discovered to cope with this situation. It is called the principle of self-criticism. It has been used in a merciless way not only in industry, but in all fields, philosophy, biology, sociology, music, art, and so on. The "critical" material resulting from the use of this principle constitutes the primary source of information, for the capitalist class, on the "failure" of the socialist economy!

According to dialectical materialism, there is some degree of error in every statement we make. The difference between truth and error is quantitative rather than qualitative. The rigid separation of error from not-error, is a formal-logic approach, is descriptive and subjective, Euclidean and absolute; as opposed to dialectical materialism, which is explanatory and objective, Einsteinian and relative. The Marxist puts emphasis upon verbs rather than nouns, sees processes rather than things. Judgment is based upon *all* relationships as forms of *movement*. The Marxist tries to get as close as he can to objective reality. But, because of the very nature of the thinking process, concepts will never *completely* coincide with reality.

Now does all this mean that a "Marxist social science" does not exist? Not at all. From the point of view of man's historical development, Marxism is the only science of society which does exist. (Of course Marxism is not merely a social science; it is based upon the totality of phenomena, resulting in the construction of a world-view.)

What is the evidence which makes Marxism a social science? This question cannot be answered in a few words as it is concerned with the complete structure of Marxian social thought. I will therefore mention one aspect of the problem. Marxian social science is based upon laws of group behavior. These laws create order out of chaos by unifying diverse phenomena. Empirical verification is found in their predictive ability. Marxism has been able to predict in an accurate way the course of development of capitalist society. The decline of "western civilization," development of monopoly, existence of imperialism and war, the class struggle on a world scale, the emergence of socialist societies, are facts which are confirmed even by the daily newspaper.

This ability to predict, consciously to control social phenomena,

is manifested in the relation between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the diplomatic battles the greatest imperialist power in the world fails each time. An adult can predict and control the behavior of a child; the child cannot do the same thing with the adult. Knowledge based upon understanding is a powerful weapon. The laws of imperialism explain the reactionary nature of capitalism-fascism. However, at the present time, most of our immediate policies are initiated and partially controlled by Moscow. This class distinction between knowledge and ignorance is certainly not new. During every period of historical development when new classes have come to power the youngest class has in a cultural way been the oldest. The chronological development of the child is thus reversed in class development. The middle class when it came to power was compelled by the material conditions of its life to devise a new system of thinking. The middle class understood the feudal lord; the feudal lord did not understand the middle class. So today, the Communist with a new system of thinking (the iron curtain) can understand the capitalist; the capitalist cannot understand the Communist. Perhaps there is an analogy between this situation and the relation of man to the animal. J. S. Mill thought that it is better to be a Socrates with a headache than a healthy pig. It does not matter much whether the animal would agree with this. Man is in a better position to judge because he is an animal and a man, whereas the animal is only an animal.

There is a body of knowledge in physics, for example, which no physicist in the world denies. This same situation exists regarding Marxian social science. It is not a question of heretics or dogmatism. The problem is not concerned with "Marxist infallibility." The problem is concerned with an *understanding* of the laws of a science which is one hundred years old.

"FREE ENTERPRISE" DEPARTMENT

The extent of concentration of economic power in the aluminum industry in 1947, as shown in the recently published Report of the Federal Trade Commission "The Concentration of Productive Facilities."

Rank	Company	Percent of net capital assets owned by each corporation	Cumulative percent owned
1.	Aluminum Co. of America	55.0	55.0
2.	Reynolds Metal Co.	30.0	85.0
3.	Permanente Metals Corp.	15.0	100.0

DISCUSSION AND ACTION

BY JOSEPH GILBERT, MINNEAPOLIS

I have read for the second time your article in the March issue inviting discussion of "Cooperation on the Left." I have also read with much interest the articles in succeeding issues by all those who responded to your invitation.

While discussion is interesting, its value is merely academic unless translated into action, which in my opinion is impossible in this case. There can only be cooperation in a practical manner where there is agreement on fundamentals. Now you state at the very beginning of your invitation to discuss this question: "The task of the American Left is nothing less than the conquest of the main center and chief support of world capitalism." But the main body of what you call the Left is in favor of capitalism and seeks only to reform what it considers certain evils in the system.

The American Left is mainly composed of varied groups organized for different purposes, but all alike opposed to whatever they consider might endanger the capitalist system. They have no desire or inclination to cooperate with any organization whose ultimate aim is to do what you state is the chief task of the American Left. This is shown by the fact that the labor movement in this country refuses recognition to Communists in its organizations, and even the Progressive Party at its last convention showed signs of a growing coolness toward the Communists.

Nevertheless, discussion is good and should be encouraged for its educational value, but political action against capitalism in this country will have to wait until the time comes when large bodies of organized workers are made to realize the futility of continuing to support the two major political parties. When that time comes the organized workers will control and finance their own political party, which of necessity will adopt a socialist program, even if it be only a partial one. In the meantime the effects of socialist education will be to draw many thousands of others to its support.

I have been more or less active in socialist and progressive movements for more than fifty years. Being now 85 years old, I have retired from the struggle but am still interested. I look to see the rise of fascism in America, at which time the effect will be to unite and solidify the forces of labor, and these will be led by those who understand and believe in the principles of socialism.

MONTHLY REVIEW

(continued from inside front cover)

cost us very little. We have had to reprint twice (this explains why some of you didn't get what you asked for as quickly as we would have liked), and we have now distributed about 11,000 copies of the article in addition to those that originally went to subscribers.

Most of the opinions expressed in letters accompanying requests have been enthusiastically in agreement with our analysis of the Korean problem. There were a few dissents (two readers cancelled their subscriptions), and a larger (though still very small) minority took the position that we failed to deal with the most important problem posed by events in Korea, namely, the extent to which the war is a case of attempted Russian expansion. We certainly agree that "Russian expansionism" is an important problem, but we do not think it can be most usefully discussed in connection with a specific situation like Korea. It has to be put in its proper historical context. We have tried to do this in the current Review of the Month which analyzes the nature and implications of American foreign policy. "Korea" and "Sound the Alarm!" should be read in conjunction. We would be glad to have your reactions to our analysis of the "Russian expansionism" question. If we get any valuable contributions on the subject we will try to make room for them in a later issue.

One of the most interesting things about the comments on the Korea article has been the cross-section character of the responding group. Small businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and ministers have been particularly well represented—a few workers (we are more conscious than anyone that we have not yet succeeded in reaching a substantial working-class readership)—a good-sized number of students—a retired brigadier general—a state legislator—a state supreme court justice—a half-dozen or so college teachers. As we look through the file we get a strong impression that deep dissatisfaction over the Korean situation is much more widespread in the United States than superficial indications would lead one to believe. It is partly this impression that led us to the conclusion of "Sound the Alarm!" in this month's issue, that the Left now has a real opportunity to participate creatively in the formation of an intelligent, critical, and effective public opinion on America's world policy.

Incidentally, we would like very much to answer personally all the splendid letters we have received on Korea, but you will recall from earlier editions of Notes From the Editors that we are operating on a shoestring—we don't even have a stenographer—and we just haven't got the time. Please accept our apologies and treat this note as though it were personally addressed to all of you who have written to us.

One of our readers, having commented on the Korea article, goes on as follows: "I am very happy to learn of your projected memorial issue on Matthiessen [which we now hope to make the October issue]. It prompts me to inquire about something which has suggested itself to my mind before this: how about literary features in MR—criticism, poetry, stories, reviews of current books? Or do you propose that MR should remain an essentially political and economic journal? Perhaps the addition would require a greater expansion of your facilities than you are currently prepared to make. Anyhow I feel that there is a need for a broad, non-partisan socialist literary review."

(continued on inside back cover)

(continued from page 168)

This is a problem to which we too have given some thought. The real question is not whether the expansion to include literature and the arts would be a good idea. Obviously it would, even from the point of view of doing the strictly economic and political analysis more effectively. A broader publication would appeal to more readers, would acquire a larger circulation, and would have more influence. The real question is very simply: where would the money come from? We would have to have at least one editor for literature and the arts, probably a managing editor to keep the two parts operating in coordination, a secretary—and for a staff of that size a regular office would be essential. All this would cost money, lots of it. Of course, the increase in circulation, once it had time to materialize, would partly meet this problem and *might* meet it altogether.

This is the kind of problem involved. We are certainly in no position to consider it in more practical terms now. But we are thinking along these lines, and we would like to have the advice and suggestions of our readers. How large is the potential readership of a more general socialist magazine? How general should it be? Is there any way the necessary money could be raised? If you have any ideas on these or related subjects we'd be glad to have them.

Meanwhile, may we remind you that we must have more subscribers even to continue publishing the kind of magazine we are publishing? And that MR's effectiveness depends almost entirely on how many people it reaches? The Korean proofsheets has already brought in quite a number of new subs and also has spurred some to renew who had allowed their subs to lapse. But there must be many more among the 11,000 to whom it has been distributed who can be signed up if someone will only take the trouble to do it. Lots of you say that you think MR is doing a good job and wish us all the luck in the world. We're grateful, but we would be even more grateful if you would show your appreciation in the concrete form of a much-increased flow of new subs.

A Brooklyn subscriber writes: "Like your Boston reader who is anxious to meet with other MR readers in his vicinity, I too would welcome such a group in Brooklyn. In fact I would be happy to have such a group meet in my house." Interested Brooklyn readers can send their names and addresses to us, and we will forward them to the writer of this letter. Incidentally, if any MR discussion groups are actually in existence we would like to hear about it and to learn what their experiences have been.

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